



COMMONWEALTH COMMUNIQUE

A Publication for State Employees

APRIL 2005

HEALTH INSURANCE

By Personnel Cabinet Secretary
Erwin Roberts and Cabinet for Health
and Family Services Secretary
James Holsinger

The legislators worked hard during the 2005 General Session and have passed a budget for the Commonwealth. With the budget approved for the upcoming fiscal year, we can now move forward with some of the new initiatives being planned to help us provide the services our citizens deserve and expect.

Over the past several months, the Administration has heard from many of you about the need to improve communication regarding the Public Employee Health Insurance Program. The Personnel Cabinet and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services are committed to providing you with greater information regarding

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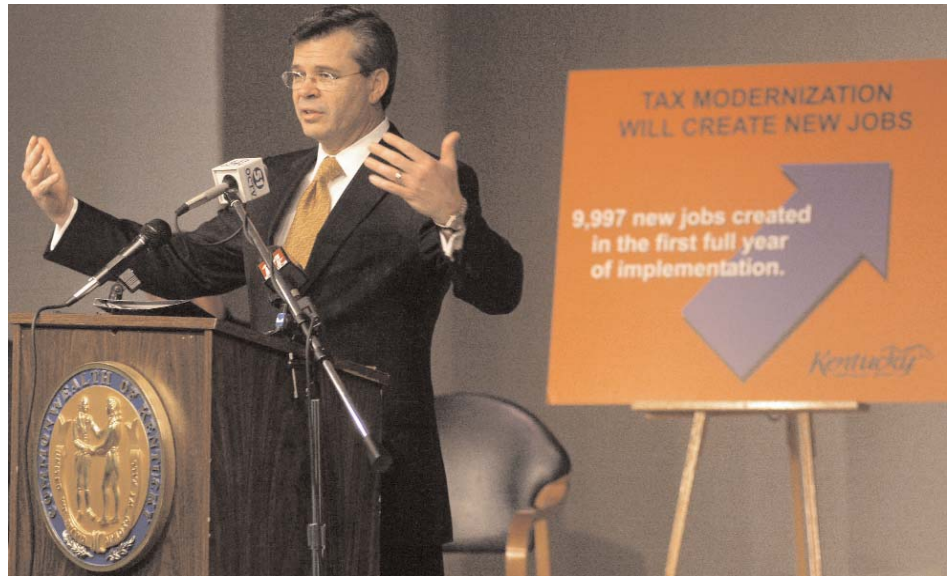
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Above, Governor Ernie Fletcher explains the tax modernization plan.

(Photo by Office of Creative Services)

GOVERNOR ERNIE FLETCHER'S MESSAGE TO EMPLOYEES

Dear State Employees,

I want to thank you for your diligence in finding efficiencies to help us stretch tax dollars further and provide better services to the Commonwealth.

In addition, state employees have worked tirelessly to make this legislative session a successful one – through the passage of a budget, JOBS for Kentucky tax modernization and many other important initiatives.

One important component of the budget that passed last month is a 3 percent raise in Fiscal Year 2006 for state employees. This budget also provides for maintaining the current public employee health insurance benefit plan through the current biennium.

The session resulted in many other positive results for our working families and our communities. Here are several of the ways you and many other Kentuckians will benefit.

JOBS for Kentucky

Tax modernization will let workers keep more of their hard-earned money and strengthen communities in many ways, including:

- An estimated 10,000 new jobs;
- An income tax cut for most working Kentuckians;

See *GOVERNOR*, page 16

Q&A**SECRETARY LAJUANA S. WILCHER**

LaJuana S. Wilcher was living on her farm near her hometown of Bowling Green when she got the call from Governor Fletcher to be the first secretary of the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet. The new cabinet is a combination of three former cabinets - Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Public Protection and Regulation, and Labor.

The reason for joining the cabinets was to put many of Kentucky's regulatory systems in one place.

"The Governor wants a regulatory process that is efficient and effective, one that ensures a safe and healthy environment and workplace and one that helps grow opportunities for all Kentuckians," said Wilcher.

Wilcher, appointed secretary in December 2003, oversees a host of areas, including mining, horse racing, forestry, liquor licensing, workers' compensation, workplace safety, waste management, construction codes, boxing and professional mud wrestling.

That's the short list. In all, Wilcher leads four departments, 19 offices, 63 divisions, two councils, three authorities, five boards and six commissions, and nearly 3,000 employees.

Wilcher says her education and experience in the public and private sectors prepared her for her role. She graduated with a biology degree from Western Kentucky University. In 1980, she received a degree from the Salmon P. Chase College of Law at Northern Kentucky University, where she studied environmental law.

After law school, she was a trial lawyer in Bowling Green. However, at the time, environmental issues were not a hot topic in Bowling Green, or in Kentucky. Determined to practice environmental law, Wilcher loaded her clothes and her cat in her 1980 Fiat Spider and headed to Washington, DC, "the capital of lawyers," for some adventure.

Her plan was to stay a year, but the career challenges available to her in the nation's capital turned into 19 years.

Wilcher worked in the Reagan and the first Bush administrations. She worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and, after being confirmed by the U.S. Senate, was the Environmental Protection Agency's assistant administrator for water. After five years with the EPA, Wilcher worked for two of the country's largest law firms.



But she couldn't ignore her deep Kentucky roots-roots that go back at least 200 years to ancestors in Marion and Casey Counties. In 2001 she moved back to her native state.

Question: What brought you back to Kentucky?

I always planned to move back to Kentucky when I retired, but a few years ago I decided - why wait? There is something about Kentucky's people and places that drew me home, like it does other people with deep roots here.

Question: How has your career prepared you to be secretary?

Every job has helped to prepare me. As a naturalist at Mammoth Cave National Park in the 1970s, I learned about our ecosystems and the interrelationships, and interdependence, of people, plants and animals.

As a young lawyer, I learned how our judicial system works and the importance of crafting laws. In Washington, DC I learned how government works and gained the tools of management. Working in two of the country's largest firms exposed me to cutting edge legislative and regulatory issues and enabled me to work with many different people and perspectives.

Question: What else prepared you to tackle regulatory issues?

I have been both a regulator and the regulated on a range of issues. These diverse experiences have given me a broad perspective, schizophrenia, or both.

Question: Did Governor Fletcher give you any specific guidance?

Governor Fletcher's integrity, and his commitment to ensuring that all of state government operates with integrity, provide my guiding principle.

Question: You worked at the USDA and the EPA. Now you're again in public service. What do you feel you bring to public service and to state government?

I believe public servants need to be committed to making a difference, to making things better and to continuous

See WILCHER, page 13

DEFERRED COMPENSATION: OPTIONAL BENEFIT HELPS MANY MEET RETIREMENT PLANS

By the Staff of the Kentucky Public Employees Deferred Compensation Authority

One of Kentucky State Government's finest optional employee benefit programs may also be one of its best-kept secrets, and we want to take this opportunity to share this secret with you. We are referring to the tax-sheltered supplemental IRC 401(k) and 457 Retirement Plans available to all state government employees.

That's right, state employees in Kentucky can participate in a 401(k) or 457 plan! In fact, more than 25,000 current or former state employees are members in one or both of our plans.

These plans, which allow you to supplement the state's Defined Benefit Plan (KRS), are administered by the Kentucky Public Employees' Deferred Compensation Authority (Authority), which is a state government entity.

Because we have no profit margin, costs have been kept exceptionally low.

Another advantage to being a participant in the Authority's plan(s) is that you know that prompt, efficient service from a fellow state government employee is only a phone call away. You never have to worry about a here-today, gone-tomorrow agent, broker, or company.

Kentucky Deferred Compensation provides you with the long-term investment savings plans required to meet your retirement needs. We have all heard concerns about Social Security, and the state's retirement system is not designed to replace 100 percent of your income. But the Authority can help you bridge that gap, and you can do it the convenient way through payroll deduction.

Tax deferral means you pay no federal or state taxes on your contributions to the Plan(s), or on any of the earnings, until the money is paid out to you, often long after you have retired. You may also pay lower taxes when you receive your payout. First, you may find yourself in a lower tax bracket after you retire.

How does Deferred Compensation work for you?

The example at the top of this page shows how tax-deferred retirement investing can have a positive impact on your monthly income. In this example, we have assumed a salary of \$24,000. The employee saves \$20 in taxes each paycheck, or \$480 annually, by investing through Deferred Compensation instead of investing in an account which is not tax-deferred. This translates into more money that can

	Pre-tax With DC	After-tax Without DC
Your gross paycheck (24 pays)	\$1,000	\$1,000
Pre-Tax DC Deferral	\$ 125	-----
Taxable Income	\$ 875	\$1,000
Federal & State Taxes* (includes Medicare and Social Security)	\$ 150	\$ 170
After-Tax deduction	-----	\$ 125
Discretionary Income	\$ 725	\$ 705

*Assumes 2003-2004 tax rates for a married Kentucky taxpayer with no children, filing jointly and using standard deduction.

work for your retirement or other savings goals. You also pay no current taxes on the interest or earnings in your account. Earnings compound without taxation, allowing a potentially greater savings accumulation over time.

Both the 401(k) and the 457 plans offer loans.

Changes to your account are easy to make: over our award-winning Web-site (kentuckydcp.com), through our telephone voice response system, by calling the Authority's Participant Service Team, or in person at our Frankfort office (105 Sea Hero Road, Suite 1).

Earlier we noted that many state employees participate, however, thousands do not, letting this wonderful opportunity to save for their retirement on a tax-sheltered basis slip away. Thousands of others participate, but at only a minimal level.

Studies show that each year Americans are living longer in retirement. When you factor in the uncertainties currently surrounding Social Security, it is obvious that many of us need to increase our personal savings.

Kentucky Deferred Compensation would be delighted to help you personalize your retirement savings plan. We can be the solution, rather than a secret.

You can join, increase your deferrals, or make changes to your account at any time. There is no "Open Enrollment Period" for Kentucky Deferred Compensation.

To enroll today, or for more information, call toll free at (800)542-2667. In Frankfort, call 573-7925.

We look forward to serving you!

SPECIAL STATE PARKS RATE FOR STATE EMPLOYEES



Above, the lodge at Dale Hollow State Resort Park

The Department of Parks appreciates the support of state employees. As a way of expressing our thanks, the department offers a special \$55 room rate for state employees on both business and leisure travel. This offer is good throughout the year.

Now is a great time to see the improvements that we've made in the park system. Try out one of our nationally recognized golf courses. Take part in one of our special events, from a photography weekend to a 5k road race. Or, just do nothing; relax in a comfortable lodge room with new guest amenities and enjoy the peace and solitude of a state park getaway.

The department's new online reservations service makes it easy to book a room at any of our 17 resort parks. Go online to the Department of Parks' Web site at <http://www.stateparks.ky.gov/>, click on the link for reservations, choose the park and dates of your stay, and type in SG5 in the "Promo Code" field.

When making a reservation by phone, you can mention the promotional code or identify yourself as a state employee.

Let us know how we're doing. Feel free to fill out a guest comment card during your stay or contact us through our Web site. Your suggestions will help us reach our goal of 100 percent guest satisfaction.



The annual Governor's Derby Breakfast will be on the Capitol grounds on Derby Day, May 7th. The event is free and open to the public.

"Kentucky is nationally and internationally known for our Kentucky Derby celebration. It is an excellent opportunity to highlight all that our commonwealth has to offer. I look forward to celebrating this exciting time with visitors from across the state and across the country," said Governor Ernie Fletcher.

"Governor Fletcher and I invite all Kentuckians to the Capitol to join in a traditional Southern-style breakfast along with true Southern hospitality," Mrs. Fletcher stated. "The Governor's Derby Breakfast is a great way to start a wonderful day of Kentucky traditions."

The annual public celebration dates from 1971, and has been staged on the Capitol grounds for most of those years.

A full menu of breakfast items prepared by the Department of Parks will be served up free under the big tent. Guests will help themselves to country ham, sausage, scrambled eggs, apples, cheese grits, biscuits, pastries, muffins, fruit juices, and coffee. Food will be served from 7 a.m. until 11 a.m.

GOVERNOR'S DERBY POSTER UNVEILED



Governor Ernie Fletcher and First Lady Glenna Fletcher have unveiled the official 2005 Governor's Kentucky Derby Poster – *The First Turn*.

The poster features a vivid photo by native Kentuckian John S. Hockensmith and captures horse racing at one of its most exciting

moments – as horses and riders come around the turn. The poster will join past years' posters as a collector's item.

The photographer, Hockensmith, began his professional career in Frankfort in 1975. His work is currently displayed in collections throughout the United States, Japan, and other countries.

The poster, which makes an excellent keepsake, is available for purchase for \$20, taxes, postage and handling included.

It may be purchased online at the Kentucky Historical Society 1792 Store's Web site at <http://store.kentucky.gov/kyhs/>. It will also be sold during the Governor's Derby Breakfast.

KENTUCKY ROAD TRIPS

KENTUCKY HORSE PARK IS ALL ABOUT HORSES



Left, *Kentucky*, a painting by Edward Troye, c. 1867, is part of the Henry Clay exhibit at the Kentucky Horse Park. (Photo by M. S. Rezney) Kentucky was one of the finest horses ever bred at Clay's Ashland and one of the finest runners of the 19th century.

If watching the Run for the Roses makes you want to know more about horses, the Kentucky Horse Park in Lexington is the place to go.

The park is not only a working horse farm, but it also hosts equine art exhibits, competitions, and numerous other educational opportunities and special events. There's even an on-site campground for families who want to spend more than a day at the park.

The current exhibit at the park's International Museum of the Horse is *Kentucky Bloodlines: The Legacy of Henry Clay*.

Clay is well known as a statesman, orator and wealthy businessman, but the *Legacy* exhibit is devoted to his often overlooked equine prowess and the legacy of Clay's Ashland Stud in the horse industry. Clay was one of the leaders in establishing the Bluegrass region of Kentucky as the nation's premier Thoroughbred breeding center, and two Kentucky Derby winners were foaled at Ashland Stud.

The exhibit will run through Oct. 31.

For more information, go online to www.kyhorsepark.com.

Horse Park Camping

The Kentucky Horse Park campground is a full-service facility with many extras, including planned recreational activities, junior Olympic-sized pool, a playground, grocery and gift shop, two bathhouses with modern conveniences, laundromats, and lighted tennis and basketball courts.

The campground has 260 campsites with electric and water hookups and unlimited primitive camping. For more information, call (800)370-6416.

Summer Riding Lessons

This summer's Kentucky Horse Park Youth Riding Program will introduce children and teens, ages 10 to 18, to a sport that can bring a lifetime of enjoyment. Participants will learn the basics of equine care as well as balanced seat riding.

Four sessions will be held. The first session, May 31 through June 3, is \$120. The other sessions are \$150 each. Any two sessions can be taken for \$250.

For more information on the riding program, call Margi Stickney at (859)259-4206.

PARKS BEST KEPT SECRETS

NATURAL BRIDGE IS A FAMILY AFFAIR

For the Means family of Powell County, Natural Bridge State Resort Park is more than their local park. It has been their employer for three generations.

Today, Bobby Means, the park's maintenance supervisor, carries on a tradition of service to the park that dates back to a time when cars had running boards and no man left his house without a hat.

The connection between the Means family and Natural Bridge started shortly after WW II when Oscar Means came to work for the park. For the next 20 years, Mr. Means helped keep the popular park in tip-top shape as its maintenance supervisor. A few years after his retirement, his son Bill took over the position.

Another son, J.C., decided on a career in the U.S. Navy, but after 20 years in the service, he began working for his brother at Natural Bridge.

Bobby Means, J.C.'s son, grew up knowing that his career path would involve working with his hands. "I was always tinkering with something," he recalled.

While attending Powell County High School, Bobby held a seasonal job as a lifeguard at Natural Bridge in 1979. He's worked at Natural Bridge ever since. He worked as a park ranger briefly before becoming a park electrician in 1983.

His Uncle Bill retired from the park in the early 1980s, when J.C. took over as supervisor. J.C. retired after two years. Bobby has held the position since 2003.

When he's not on the job, Bobby enjoys competition shooting with muzzle-loading flintlock rifles.

It would appear that when Bobby Means leaves Natural Bridge, it's the end of the line for a Means family member working in the maintenance department.

His daughter, Cassandra, is a student at Eastern Kentucky University, and she shows no interest in getting into the family business, Bobby reports.

STATE, NATIONAL HONORS FOR EMPLOYEES

HOUSE HONORS INJURED TROOPER

The Kentucky House of Representatives announced a resolution on Feb. 24 honoring Kentucky State Police Trooper Rick Conn. The officer was severely injured while helping rescue residents at the scene of a natural gas line explosion in Floyd County on Nov. 9.

On the House floor, Floyd County's Rep. Chuck Meade spoke of how Conn's actions altered the trooper's life. "These injuries (sustained during the rescue) may prevent him from ever returning to his normal duties as a state trooper," said Meade.

"It's too early to tell if he can return to KSP Post 9 in Pikeville, where he has served for nine years. His quick thinking saved two lives, and his bravery is an example for all of us."

Conn, who had no prior knowledge that a House resolution had been drafted to honor him, was present for the resolution's reading. Conn was also introduced to the



Rep. Chuck Meade, left, and Trooper Rick Conn (Photo by: LRC Public Information Office)

Senate, which had passed a resolution honoring him while he was still in the hospital.

KSP Commissioner Mark L. Miller said he was pleased by the recognition of an officer who displayed such extraordinary valor.

"Trooper Conn made a great personal sacrifice the day he put himself in harm's way to rescue others," said Miller. "He is a model of selflessness and courage for everyone."

Conn was off duty, driving through his Ivel neighborhood when the explosion occurred. The blast blew out win-

dows of his SUV, and Conn crawled through a window to get out of the damaged vehicle. He heard cries for aid and ran to a burning house, where he helped a mother and her 2-year-old daughter escape.

After Conn moved the two to safety, he collapsed from his injuries. Conn received second- and third-degree burns on his hands, chest and face.

BUCKNER RECOGNIZED

As part of Black History Month, Kentucky State Police Commissioner Mark L. Miller recognized Leroy Buckner, a retired trooper who has had the longest tenure of any African-American KSP officer. Buckner served KSP for 29 years.



Leroy Buckner

Buckner received many accolades during his career, including the two highest awards that can be bestowed on an officer, the Guthrie Crowe award and the KSP Citation for Bravery. He also received the Citation for Meritorious Service and seven Letters of Commendation.

Buckner's son, Trooper Cory Buckner, is assigned to the Bowling Green Post. A daughter, La Tasha Buckner, is a Jessamine County assistant commonwealth's attorney, and another daughter, Kimberly Buckner, attends the University of Louisville.

Buckner and his wife Linda live in Glasgow.

NATIONAL APPOINTMENTS FOR KET STAFF

Michele Ripley, president of the Commonwealth Fund for KET, and Carrie Grate, KET's Ready to Learn Coordinator, have been selected to serve on national PBS advisory groups.

Ripley will serve on the National Development Advisory Committee for a three-year term, and Grate will serve on the PBS Ready to Learn Station Advisory Council as an at-large representative.

The Development Advisory Committee provides important advice and counsel to PBS and its development staff. It guides the PBS staff on important policy matters and assists in setting priorities for support services.

Ready To Learn is a national effort that prepares children for success in school through the reach of public broadcasting. The core of Ready To Learn is a full day of non-violent, commercial-free, educational children's television programming that is broadcast free of charge to every American household.

As president of the Commonwealth Fund for KET, Ripley directs fund raising and strategies focused on raising private support from 28,000 members in seven states. In the past two years, the Fund has seen a 99 percent growth in net revenue. For this outstanding achievement, KET received the PBS Development Award for Overall Development Program in 2003, and five subsequent national fund raising awards in 2004.

Prior to joining KET, Ripley worked for the University of Kentucky, serving as national marketing director for the university and development and public relations director for the College of Fine Arts and Singletary Center for the Arts.

Grate is a graduate of Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington, and received her Montessori teacher certification from Gonzaga University.

ANNUAL MOTORCYCLE RAFFLE TO BENEFIT CAMP FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN

The Kentucky State Police (KSP) is raffling a Harley-Davidson® motorcycle to benefit Trooper Island Inc., a non-profit camp for disadvantaged children.

Each tax-deductible \$10 ticket earns the buyer a chance to win a 2005 Harley-Davidson® FLSTF/FLSTFI Fat Boy® motorcycle. The black motorcycle, worth approximately \$20,000, has a 1450cc twin-cam engine with chrome covers and solid disc front- and rear-wheel brakes. It includes hardtail styling with hidden horizontal shocks, a large tank-mounted speedometer and electronic sequential port fuel injection.

The fundraiser for Trooper Island, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, helps the organization host free summer camps each year for 800 children ages 10 to 12. Trooper Island runs solely on contributions.

The camps' activities include canoeing, water safety,



archery, crafts, fishing, swimming, citizenship instruction and environmental awareness.

There also are three free camps each year for children with special needs.

To obtain raffle tickets, contact any Kentucky State Police post or call the KSP Media Relations Branch in Frankfort at (502)695-6344. A maximum of

15,000 tickets will be sold.

Tickets will also be sold at the Kentucky State Fair and Exposition Center in Louisville during the 2005 Kentucky State Fair. The winning ticket will be drawn at the KSP exhibit in the South Wing during the fair. The drawing will be held on Aug. 28 at 4 p.m. Ticket holders do not need to be present to win.

This raffle is being conducted via Charitable Gaming License #0000633.

KHC AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONFERENCE

Plans are underway for the Kentucky Affordable Housing Conference, *Spirit in Unity – Achieving Common Ground*, presented by the Kentucky Housing Corporation. The conference will be held Oct. 27 and 28 at the Lexington Convention Center.

As the state housing finance agency, KHC has been hosting the conference for 20 years. The conference historically attracts around 650 affordable housing advocates from across the state. Attendees typically include home-builders, mortgage bankers, real estate agents, housing producers and developers, as well as local, state and federal agency representatives who work with housing issues.

Kent Colton, author of *Housing in the Twenty-First Century*, will deliver the keynote address.

For more information, watch the KHC Web site at www.kyhousing.org.

KENTUCKY 4TH IN NATION IN TEACHER TRAINING

Quality Counts, an *Education Week* publication, touts Kentucky's assessment and support of new teachers.

Kentucky is ranked fourth nationally for teacher training initiatives implemented by the Education Professional Standards Board.

Education Week has tracked a wide-ranging set of education policies across the 50 states and the District of Columbia for the past nine years.

This year's report highlights the significant changes states are making in the areas of student achievement, standards and accountability, allocation of resources, school climate, and improved teacher quality.

Kentucky was ranked only four points behind the national leader, Louisiana. Kentucky and Arkansas share the fourth-place ranking score of 89.

GOVERNOR FORMS MINORITY ACTION GROUP

A group has been formed that will be responsible for establishing Kentucky as a state which encourages and welcomes minorities to earn their living, raise their families, and pursue their dreams, Governor Ernie Fletcher announced on March 1.

The group, the Minority Action Committee, will be chaired by Tierra Kavanaugh Turner, executive director of the Governor's Office of Minority Empowerment.

Other members are: Erwin Roberts, Secretary of the Personnel Cabinet; Derrick Ramsey, Deputy Secretary of Commerce; Mike Alexander, Governor's Deputy General Counsel; Bob Ramsey, Special Assistant to the Adjutant General in Military Affairs; Delanor Manson, Deputy Secretary, Cabinet for Health and Family Services; Penny Armstrong, Executive Director, Office of Employment Training; and Jerry Blanton, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Parks.

KENTUCKY WOMEN REMEMBERED; MARCH WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



Left, Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a proclamation declaring March Women's History Month in Kentucky

Three women became a permanent part of the state Capitol on March 4 when their portraits were unveiled and added to the Kentucky Women Remembered exhibit.

The 2005 additions are the late Mary Elliott Flanery and the late Jeannette Bell Thomas, both of Boyd County, and Dr. Liliblyce Akers of Jefferson County.

The Kentucky Women Remembered exhibit has showcased the historic contributions of Kentucky women for 25 years. Each year, one to three women are selected from among nominations and added to the exhibit. The selection committee is made up of board members of the Kentucky Commission on Women, the exhibit's sponsor.

During this year's unveiling of new portraits, Governor Ernie Fletcher signed a proclamation declaring March Women's History Month across the Commonwealth.

For more information on Kentucky Women Remembered and the commission, go to the commission's Web site at <http://www.women.ky.gov/>

ETHICS ADVISORY OPINIONS SUMMARY

To help educate the employees of your agency on provisions contained in the code of ethics, the staff of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission will provide a class of up to three hours at no charge. This class can be tailored to your specific agency, and includes many hands-on activities.

To schedule a class, call Jo Ledford at (502)564-7954.

Following are summaries of some recent Ethics Commission opinions.

Advisory Opinion 04-5: Employees may not privately offer continuing professional education for compensation to persons regulated by their state agency.

Advisory Opinion 04-6: Regarding retirement parties and events for state employees, management and employees need to be mindful of the requirement of the Executive Branch Code of Ethics which cautions all state employees to be good stewards of state time and resources.

See ETHICS, page 15

1 IN 8 ADULT KENTUCKIANS MAY HAVE DIABETES; AWARENESS AND EARLY DETECTION PROMOTED

The Center for Disease Control estimates that approximately 376,000 adult Kentuckians – or one in eight – have diagnosed or undiagnosed diabetes.

The Kentucky Diabetes Prevention and Control Program of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is working to raise awareness of diabetes, a devastating disease that affects 18.2 million Americans and kills 213,000 people annually.

According to the CDC 2003 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, approximately 267,000 adults in Kentucky – or 8.5 percent of the adult population – have been diagnosed with diabetes. It is estimated that an additional 109,000 Kentucky adults may have undiagnosed diabetes.

Another estimated 40 percent of Kentuckians ages 40 to 74 have pre-diabetes, which means that their blood glucose (sugar) is higher than normal but not high enough to be classified as diabetes. Those Kentuckians are at very high risk for developing the disease.

If you should have any symptoms, such as frequent urination, blurred vision, losing weight without trying, and excessive thirst, call your health care provider immediately for a blood glucose test. Unfortunately, many individuals with type 2 diabetes show no symptoms. The disease often becomes evident only when an individual develops heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, eye damage and nerve damage that can lead to amputations. With early detection and treatment, these complications can be prevented or delayed.

You can lower your risk for developing diabetes by keeping your weight in control, staying active, and eating low-fat meals that are high in fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

To learn if you might be at risk for diabetes, go online to the American Diabetes Association Web site at www.diabetes.org and take the *Risk Test*, or talk to your health care provider. You may also call your local health department or (800)DIABETES for free information.

KENTUCKY EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**KEAP INFORMED: STEPS TO IMPROVING YOUR MOOD**

By Trina Jennings, KEAP

Have you ever said, "This situation (or person) is driving me nuts?" Often we place the cause of our feelings on situations or other individuals' behavior when in reality we are in charge of our feelings and responses.

Largely, our moods are determined by how we THINK about events rather than the actual events themselves. Our "self-talk" is so powerful, be it positive or negative, that it not only impacts our moods, but also our physical and mental well-being. Over time, negative or distorted thinking can become so automatic we are unaware it is actually a choice we make.

Consider this scenario: At work you notice you are feeling anxious. Your breathing is short, your mind is racing in several directions, and attending to the physical symptoms tends to magnify the anxiety. Stop and think about what you are saying to yourself. If you say things like, "I'll never be able to do this project. It's too complex. I can't handle it!" notice how those thoughts create anxiety versus saying to yourself "I can break this up into manageable tasks. I'll do my best."

A complete guide to changing unhealthy thoughts can be found in *Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy* by David Burns, M.D.

The basic steps are:

1. Recognize your feelings and responses.
2. Take a close look at what you say to yourself and recognize unhelpful, negative thoughts. Write them down.
3. Challenge the unhealthy thoughts and substitute a healthier, more rational response.

For example:**Feeling:** Discouraged**Negative Thoughts:** What a terrible, lousy day.**Alternative Responses:** A couple of bad things have happened, but everything hasn't been a disaster.

It seems almost too simple to be helpful, but changing unhealthy thoughts is KEY to establishing a good mood. Reading this exercise does not improve your mood. Practicing it does. In time, changing unhealthy, negative thoughts will become automatic. By practicing healthy thinking, YOU take control and do not allow yourself to become victim to situations and circumstances. YOU can improve your mood.

For more information call the Kentucky Employee Assistance Program at (800)445-KEAP.

KET PRESERVES PROGRAMS; RECEIVES MAJOR GRANT

With more than 35 years of Kentucky programs in its archive, Kentucky Educational Television is the premier source for video documenting Kentucky's history, but the source is in danger.

The analog videotapes containing thousands of hours of programs have a life span of about 20 years. KET is now working on preserving history by converting all programs to a more secure and accessible digital format.

The KET archive library includes programs such as *Comment on Kentucky*, *Time on the River*, coverage of the state legislature, and documentaries on Kentucky's legendary artists, writers and musicians. KET's project to preserve and digitize its archive ensures that this treasure trove of cultural, historical, biographical, educational and public affairs programming is available for years to come.

KET is the first public television network to tackle migrating its entire archival collection to a more accessible digital format. As part of preserving the archive, KET will also catalog it. This will be the cataloging standard used in public television stations across the nation and will allow educators and researchers to easily search for footage.

KET is now more than halfway through the conversion.

KET also announced receipt of a grant of \$998,000 to produce professional development resources for teachers. The grant is from the Annenberg Corporation in partnership with the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

KET recently finished another writing series for Annenberg/CPB, an eight-part professional development video series and Web site.

CONTEST TO RENAME COMMUNIQUÉ IS CLOSED

Thank you to everyone who submitted suggestions for a new name for the state employee newsletter. Hundreds of suggestions were received and the staff of *Communiqué* appreciates your response.

The contest to rename *Communiqué* is now closed to submissions, and the difficult process of selecting the best name possible has begun.

Look for an announcement of the winning name soon!

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS: PILOT PROJECT KICKS OFF AT CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

At right, First Lady Glenna Fletcher and Health and Family Services Cabinet Secretary Dr. James W. Holsinger, Jr., lead about 700 employees on a one-mile walk outside the CHR Complex on April 11 for the Get Moving CHFS! kickoff.

Get Moving Kentucky! Get Moving CHFS! is an activity of the CHFS Worksite Wellness program, which will serve as a pilot project for worksite wellness in state government as part of Governor Ernie Fletcher's Get Healthy Kentucky! initiative.

Teams of CHFS employees will use pedometers to record their physical activity over an 8-week period, with the goal of taking enough steps to walk across Kentucky.



ADOPTION REIMBURSEMENT BENEFIT HELPS STATE EMPLOYEES CREATE FAMILIES

If you're thinking about adopting a child, a little-known benefit available to state government employees can help.

Since the Adoption Reimbursement Benefit Program became effective on Nov. 1, 1998, 108 state government employees have received a total of \$304,882.73 in reimbursed adoption-related expenses.

The program is available to most employees in the Executive Branch of state government.

The adoptive parent may be reimbursed up to \$3,000 for expenses related to adopting any child. The reimbursement goes up to a \$5,000 maximum if a child with special needs is adopted. That may include children who are older, bi-racial, have mental or physical disabilities, or who must be adopted as a sibling group.

For more information on the Adoption Reimbursement Benefit, call Darlene Stewart at the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet in Frankfort at (502)564-3433.

REQUESTING STATE LIBRARY MATERIALS NOW EASIER

You now have four ways to submit your materials request to the State Library:

- Use the new online request form for books, audiobooks, videos and DVDs at

http://www.kdla.ky.gov/research/asklib_sg_materials.htm;

- Use the "Ask a Librarian State Government Information Request Form" to obtain copies of journal articles at

<http://www.kdla.ky.gov/research/sgasklib.htm>.

- Email your requests for videos and DVDs to av.circulation@ky.gov;

- Call the State Library's Circulation Desk at 1-800-928-7000, ext. 337; or

- Mail your send written requests to State Library Circulation Desk, KDLa, PO Box 537, Frankfort, KY 40602.

For more information, go online to <http://www.kdla.ky.gov>.

PUZZLE SOLVED

Below is the solution to the *Kentucky Symbols* crossword in the February issue of *Communiqué*. See page 12 of this issue for a new puzzle, *Kentucky Derby Winners*, which will be solved in the next issue.



FREE TIME

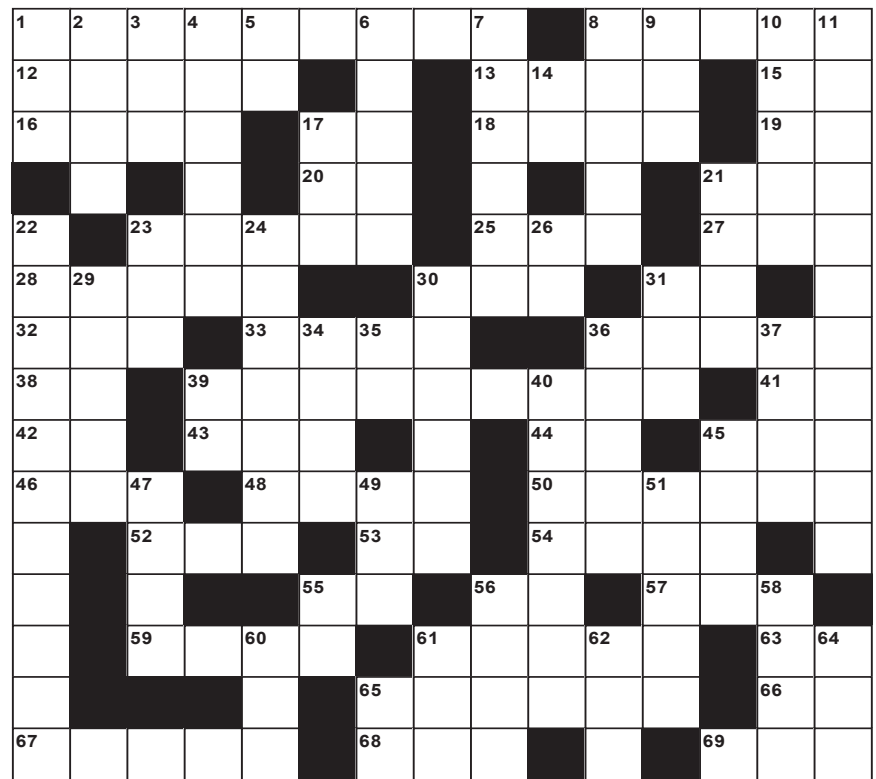
COMMUNIQUÉ CROSSWORD

KENTUCKY DERBY WINNERS

BY MARGARET DAVIS HARNEY

ACROSS

- 1 1st Derby winner
 8 Last name of 2004 Derby winner
 12 Compare to
 13 A shawl of Scottish plaid
 15 French for "of" or "from"
 16 Thought
 17 __ Armstrong, Calvacade's breeder (1934 winner)
 18 Skilled
 19 Washington, __
 20 Not off
 21 __ Forbes Won, 1982 Derby favorite
 23 Derby winner's flowers
 25 Insider's hint on which horse to bet
 27 Lil E. __, 1992 Derby winner
 28 Simple skirt or dress style
 30 Affirmative
 31 Near
 32 Carry something heavy
 33 Not near
 36 __ and fauna
 38 Ashley Judd's sch.
 39 With 6 down, home of Derby
 41 "Choice" word?
 42 Pa's wife
 43 Edge of a garment
 44 A northerly dir.
 45 __ Chi, a martial art
 46 6th sense?
 48 "Bringing up the __," in last place
 50 Thigh bones
 52 Lots of fuss
 53 Tally __, term used by fox hunters
 54 Each thing in a list
 55 Ma's husband
 56 Exist
 57 __ Priest, ancient Egyptian priest in a leopard skin robe
 59 London area noted for night life
 61 Racing colors
 63 Really fast type of e-mail message (abbrev.)
 65 Kentucky's favorite jockey every day
 66 Not applicable (abbrev.)
 67 Get on a horse
 68 Dined
 69 Pig's home



DOWN

- 1 Ben __, winner of Derby 12 in 1886
 2 What jockeys do
 3 '50s president, former general, we "liked"
 4 Spring is the horsey set's favorite one
 5 Walking Horse St.
 6 Along with 39 across, home of the Kentucky Derby
 7 1st name of 2004 Derby winner
 8 With 58 down, the official Kentucky Derby beverage
 9 Poem
 10 With 30 down, jockey with most Derby wins
 11 1973 Derby winner
 14 __ Hancock III, an owner of Sunday Silence, 1989 winner
 17 Enemy
 21 One quintillionth
 22 Farm with most Derby winners, located in Lexington
 23 Big truck
 24 1993 Derby winner, Deferred Comp.'s address
 26 Often used Latin term meaning "that is"
 29 Trainer D. Wayne ____
 30 With 10 down, jockey with most Derby wins
 31 Everyone
 34 A gas or vapor
 35 Home st. of the Razorbacks
 36 Count __, 1943 Derby winner
 37 "Smell of the grease paint, __ of the crowd."
 39 __ Durkee, breeder of 1890 winner Riley
 40 Site of the wildest Derby parties
 45 Heavy book
 47 Friends
 49 Exclamation of surprise or understanding
 51 Not neat
 55 __ Boy, a type of sandwich
 56 Sink your teeth into
 58 With 8 down, the official Kentucky Derby beverage
 60 You *have* to wear one for Derby, and maybe Easter
 61 Day of the wk. Derby is always held
 62 Kit __, candy bar
 64 Kentucky Derby month
 65 Philadelphia's st.

KENTUCKY CELEBRATES EARTH DAY; CITIZENS URGED TO RECYCLE



At left, First Lady Glenna Fletcher was one of several state government leaders who participated in the celebrity reading event to celebrate Earth Day in Kentucky on April 22. During the event, which was held at the Salato Wildlife Education Center in Frankfort, Mrs. Fletcher read *Stickeen: John Muir and the Brave Little Dog* to Frankfort's Second Street School sixth graders.

"This is a wonderful time to bring together two very important issues: literacy and our environment," said Mrs. Fletcher. (Photo by Office of Creative Services)

Earth Day was officially April 22, but was celebrated in Kentucky with a week-long series of events.

Governor Ernie Fletcher kicked off the 35th celebration of Earth Day on April 18. During the kick-off, Governor Fletcher expressed his support for improving the state's environment, and he urged all Kentuckians to recycle more, a move that will not only protect the state's environment but will improve its economy as well.

The average Kentuckian produces almost eight pounds of waste every day, Governor Fletcher noted. That's nearly one pound more than the national average and adds up to 1.45 tons each year.

"For this Earth Week, I am encouraging every Kentuckian to take personal responsibility for our environment by recycling more this year. Bottles, cans, cardboard, newspapers and plastics all have value and should be recycled," said Governor Fletcher. "I also want to encourage all Kentuckians to help us 'close the loop' by purchasing goods made from recycled materials. Manufacturers are using recycled materials in their products, but as consumers we need to support this effort by purchasing goods produced from recycled materials."

Governor Fletcher mentioned specific businesses in Kentucky that produce goods from recycled materials and employ hundreds of citizens. These companies manufacture plastic drainage chambers, strapping material, playground equipment, insulation and mulch from items such as plastic bottles, automotive interiors and newspapers.

State Government's Paper Recycling Program

LaJuana S. Wilcher, secretary of the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet (See pages 2 and 13.), said state government is doing its part by recycling white paper, mixed paper and newspapers. "On average, a state employee produces a pound of recyclable paper about every three days," said Wilcher. "Our recycling program collects 1,680

tons of paper per year, and the revenue earned pays for the entire program, meaning no tax dollars are used."

The state Transportation Cabinet is doing its part by recycling used oil, oil filters, antifreeze, batteries, guardrail and other scrap metal. The cabinet is also working to protect the environment by implementing Truck Stop Electrification. TSE technology provides a quiet, clean, cost-effective alternative to the overnight or long-term idling of diesel trucks by allowing truckers to "plug in" vehicles to operate necessary systems without idling the engine.

In addition, the Transportation Cabinet is adding fuel-efficient hybrid automobiles to the state motor pool.

Governor Fletcher also announced a new initiative aimed at increasing the awareness of mercury and lead contamination. A joint effort by the Department for Public Health, the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and EPPC will educate the public and lower the chances of harmful exposures to these contaminants.

Spearheaded by the EPPC, a number of state agencies, local governments, businesses and organizations joined together with others across the world to celebrate Earth Day. Some agencies organized environmental activities throughout the month of April while others provided information and resources on protecting Kentucky's environment.

This is the second year in a row for a month-long, organized campaign in Kentucky in celebration of Earth Day.

Visit the state Earth Day Web site at www.environment.ky.gov/earthday to learn more about Kentucky's Earth Day celebration. For more information on what state employees can do to celebrate Earth Day every day, go online to the State Employees Earth Day Web site at <http://www.environment.ky.gov/earthday/State+Employee+Earth+Day+Web+site.htm>.

From WILCHER, Page 2

improvement. I believe that we must be persistent. It's a personal and public commitment to do the right thing, day after day after day. These jobs are not easy. We need strong faith, strong internal compasses and the ability to persevere.

Question: How do you approach the regulatory process?

My approach and philosophy are from Abraham Lincoln's view that government should do for the people what they cannot do for themselves. State government has a legitimate role and responsibility in protecting the people and places of Kentucky. But I believe we can do a better job of being responsive to the public and the regulated community.

Question: How do we do that?

We need to listen more. Public participation is the key to informed regulatory decision making. My view is that the more the public is involved in the regulatory process the better the end result will be.

Question: The cabinet encompasses a broad range of issues. How do you get it all done?

Having a diverse background helps. What helps even more is surrounding oneself with people who are dedicated to improving the quality of life for all Kentuckians and who know how to translate that into specific regulatory decision-making and implementation goals. It's also about being part of a team committed to ensuring that Governor Fletcher's vision for a better future for all Kentuckians happens.

Question: We heard you work night and day. What do you do to relax?

I work a lot, but there is a lot that we need to do. I relax on the weekends by getting out to the country and being on my farm. Seeing the stars at night against a velvet sky, hearing a turkey gobble as the sun is rising, breathing in the soft country air, catching the scent of new-mown hay, being with family and friends, listening to the choir at church, baking a blackberry cobbler. These are the things that renew me and relax me.

Question: What is life like down on the farm?

I think it's what heaven must be like. I enjoy it that much. From the time of my earliest memories, I loved to be outside, where I felt connected to the natural world. Being a naturalist and guide at Mammoth Cave was an extension of my sense that we should value our natural resources. I believe that God gave us a great gift, a rich and vibrant world, and that we have a duty to be good

stewards of it. This has inspired me in most of my other jobs.

Question: Did you do any caving while working at Mammoth Cave?

Yes. Caving is a surreal experience. It tests every fiber of your physical, mental and emotional being. You are in a magical place engineered by God. It's an amazing experience to climb, crawl, twist and turn through a cave for eight or 10 hours just to come upon a seemingly isolated pool of water inhabited by a lone, eyeless, white cave fish. There in the darkness is one of God's creatures, spending its life removed from sunlight and the outside environment, yet totally dependent on both. Go to one of south central Kentucky's marvelous caves and see for yourself.

Question: We'll take that suggestion. What else can we do to learn about our environment and how to protect the planet?

So glad you asked. Earth Day was April 22, and there were many events planned in Kentucky for that day and during the month of April. There were wildflower walks and special rates on camping in our state parks, cleanup and recycling programs in many counties and educational opportunities across the state where families can learn how to help our planet. Earth Day is a worldwide event and is a chance for everyone, including all state employees, to do something to help Kentucky's environment.

Every state employee, like every Kentuckian, should take personal responsibility to improve our environment. Last year, state employees made these suggestions: Turn off lights at the end of the day; carpool to work; plant trees; install aerators in all faucets; use water displacements in high-flow toilets; participate in Earth Day events; clean up litter on lunch breaks; use rechargeable batteries; and reduce, reuse and recycle.

Every positive, individual action counts, but if we work together, we can have a large impact on our environment. I encourage everyone to get involved.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on this year's Earth Day activities in Kentucky, go online to www.environment.ky.gov/earthday.htm.

State employees are encouraged to celebrate the environment on Earth Day and every day. If you would like to share your environmentally friendly ideas with other state employees, please submit them to Margaret Harney at the Personnel Cabinet and they will be printed in a future issue of *Communiqué*.

If your ideas will improve the productivity and services of state government, remember to submit them through the **Employee Suggestion System** at <http://govnet.ky.gov/personnel/essinfo.htm>.)

From INSURANCE, Page 1

the healthcare challenges we all face. We will do our best to keep you fully informed of the challenges, while looking for long-term solutions that enhance the quality of care participants now enjoy and better manage its cost. This letter is our first step in improving our communication with our participants.

SOME BACKGROUND

As a result of last fall's special session of the legislature, a bill entitled "HB 1" was passed. This bill maintained your benefits to the 2004 benefit level, costing the Commonwealth an additional \$197 million. It also created a Blue Ribbon Panel made up of legislators, executive cabinet and employee association representatives. The Panel will examine Kentucky's healthcare cost crisis in greater detail and recommend practical solutions to the Administration. In addition, we are working closely with the Employee Advisory Committee and the Kentucky Group Health Insurance Board, which have members that represent you. Each will be sending their healthcare recommendations to the Blue Ribbon Panel.

THE CHALLENGE WE FACE

Our goal is to provide the best quality of health care for you and your family, while working within the obvious constraints of the Commonwealth's budget. This is not a simple task.

Of course the healthcare challenge is not unique to the Commonwealth. These days, you rarely read a newspaper or watch the evening news without a mention of healthcare costs. Nationwide, employers are faced with the ever increasing costs of providing healthcare benefits to their employees and retirees. Many employers have had to either pass rising costs in the form of higher premiums on to their employees, or simply reduce-or eliminate-benefits altogether. Some of the private sector employers that have absorbed the largest share of these cost increases have made up for them by raising the price of the products they sell in the marketplace. However, public sector plans-like those sponsored by state governments-do not have products they can sell to pass along the cost to buyers. Instead, states are left with two choices: either raise taxes on all citizens or cut back other services. Neither choice is a good one.

WHAT CAN BE DONE

Over the next few months, we will be looking at ways we can take some of the cost out of the current health system. We will be examining how we can make the existing health plan more efficient-mostly by cutting administrative

expenses, reducing insurer profit margins, and securing better network discounts and pharmacy rebates within the plan.

In addition to taking a closer look at the plan's operations and how it is funded, we are also examining other ways to more effectively manage the Commonwealth's program over the long haul. While we don't believe we will ever be able to cut premiums, we do believe that we can better control the size of future increases.

We are studying others states who have done just that-significantly cut costs without compromising quality. By studying other states, taking a closer look at our own existing plan and future options, we hope to find a solution that's right for Kentucky.

UNDER CONSIDERATION

Some of the enhancements we are considering include:

- Moving from a healthcare model that simply treats illness to one that promotes wellness (or, as you may have heard it referred to, moving from an "Illness model" to a "Wellness model")
- Promoting the use of pre-tax savings plans to help you meet your family's growing medical expenses
- Making better use of supplemental benefits like dental coverage, vision care and life insurance

MOVING FORWARD

Please know that we are absolutely committed to your health, the health of your family, and the health of the Commonwealth. We will be providing more information to you as it becomes available.

For now, we encourage you to check the Personnel Cabinet's Department for Employee Insurance Web site for more information. We will be adding documentation presented by the above mentioned groups to our Web site.

You may also want to find out who your representative is on the Employee Advisory Committee, the Kentucky Group Health Insurance Board and the Blue Ribbon Panel. They are your voice on these committees.

This Administration, the Legislature and each of the employee groups are working hard to provide you with the best health insurance and total compensation possible. Expect to hear more from us throughout the process of finding a healthcare solution that's right for Kentucky.

HELPFUL WEB SITES

Department of Employee Insurance:

<http://personnel.ky.gov/dei.htm>

Employee Advisory Committee:

<http://personnel.ky.gov/hlthins/eac.htm>

Group Health Insurance Board:

<http://personnel.ky.gov/hlthins/kygrhibd.html>

CALENDAR

MAY

April 1-October 31: The Legacy of Henry Clay exhibit, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington. (See page 5.)

April 28 - May 1: Kentucky Rolex Three-Day Event, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington (The event will be broadcast on NBC on May 8 at 4 p.m.)

May 5: Kentucky Derby Pegasus Parade, Broadway, downtown Louisville (<http://www.kdf.org/>)

May 7: Kentucky Derby, Louisville ([http://www.kentucky-derby.com/2005/Governor's Derby Breakfast](http://www.kentucky-derby.com/2005/Governor's%20Derby%20Breakfast), Frankfort. (See page 4.)

May 8: Mother's Day

May 13 - 15: Kentucky Scottish Weekend, General Butler State Park (<http://www.kyscottishweekend.org/>).

May 14: Kentucky Speedway opening weekend, Sparta (<http://www.kentucky-speedway.com/>)

May 26 - 29: Mountain Laurel Festival, Pine Mountain State Park, Pineville (<http://www.kmlf.org/>)

May 30: Memorial Day holiday (State parks have special activities planned.)

May 31 - June 3: Youth Riding Program, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington (859)259-4206



JUNE

June 4: Catch A Rainbow Fishing Derby, ages 1 to 15, Wolf Creek National Fish Hatchery, Jamestown. (270) 343-3797

June 6 - 10: Youth Riding Program, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington (859)259-4206

June 9 - 12: Festival of the Bluegrass, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington (www.festivalofthebluegrass.com)

June 10 - Sept. 5: Art exhibit by Peter Williams, world-renowned equine artist, Kentucky Horse Park. For information, call Bill Cooke at (859)259-4231, or send an e-mail to bcooke@kyhorsepark.com.

June 11 - 12: Great American Brass Band Festival, Danville (www.danvillekentucky.com/BoyleCounty/great.htm)

June 13 - 17: Youth Riding Program, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington (859)259-4206

June 14: Flag Day

June 19: Father's Day

June 20 - 24: Youth Riding Program, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington (859)259-4206

June 21: Summer begins

June 29-July 3: Region 14 Silverama Arabian Championships, Kentucky Horse Park, Lexington. Call Cindy Clinton at (937)962-4336.



From *ETHICS*, page 8

Advisory Opinion 04-10: A public servant should not refer clients with which he has contacts through his official position to his family's private business.

Advisory Opinion 04-18: A state employee may contract with, and receive compensation from, another state agency for goods and/or services totally unrelated to the employee's employment with state government so long as the employee abides by the requirements of KRS 45A.340.

Advisory Opinion 04-19: A state employee may solicit donations from a private local help agency for the benefit of clients of his state agency if the private local help agency is a charitable non-profit organization under Section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code. If the help agency is not charitable, the employee may solicit donations, but not from persons or businesses that are regulated by or doing business with the employee's state agency.

Advisory Opinion 04-26: The Governor and the Lieutenant Governor may accept 12 box seats and 12 walk-around passes for both the Kentucky Oaks and the Kentucky Derby from Churchill Downs. The acceptance of such tickets will not create an appearance of impropriety but will allow them to represent the Commonwealth nationally.

Advisory Opinion 04-29: Employees of the Office of

Insurance should not accept a boat ride during Derby festivities from an insurance company if the value of the boat ride exceeds \$25, even if the employees will be discussing insurance issues with attendees and distributing informational packets. If the agency believes it is worthwhile for the employees to attend such a function, the agency should pay for the value of the boat ride.

Advisory Opinion 04-34: Employees should not be involved in interviewing, recommending, or approving family members for positions within their agencies. They should not directly supervise a family member or evaluate a family member's job performance.

Advisory Opinion 04-45: A Department of Military Affairs employee must seek approval from the appointing authority of his agency for his outside employment with an airport contractor.

ADDITIONAL LEADERS IN ETHICS

The Ethics Commission has added the following agencies to its list of Leaders in Ethics published in the February issue of *Communiqué*: Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corp.; Veterans' Affairs, Advisory Board; Veterinary Examiners, Board of; Wastewater Systems Operators, Board of Certification; Women, Commission on; and the Worker's Compensation Funding Commission.

From GOVERNOR, Page 1

At left, on the front steps of the state capitol, Governor Ernie Fletcher signed historic tax modernization legislation into law on March 18. First Lady Glenna Fletcher, state lawmakers, and members of Governor Fletcher's cabinet were gathered to participate in this momentous occasion.

(Photo by Office of Creative Services)

- Removal of almost 500,000 low-income family members off the tax rolls;
- A first-ever college tuition state tax credit, which provides a maximum credit of up to \$500 per student for any public or private college or university in Kentucky. An estimated 61,000 families are expected to qualify for the credit.
- Incentives for redevelopment of abandoned industrial sites, historic preservation, horse breeders and environmental efforts, which will stabilize, strengthen and preserve the unique heritage of our commonwealth.

A budget that invests in our future

Tax modernization, strong fiscal management and an improving economy enable us to make additional investments in this budget, including:

- Education: Post-secondary education will receive an \$82 million - or 9 percent - increase in funding as well as important investments in infrastructure. K-12 education will receive a \$524 million increase - or 17 percent for fiscal year 2006 over 2004 funding.
- Medicaid: The largest increased investment in General Fund for Medicaid ever made during a two-year period will be achieved with an additional \$94 million in General Fund for fiscal year 2005 and \$164 million in fiscal year 2006.
- Transportation: Because good roads are essential to economic development and safety, the budget includes \$600 million for road projects.

This session also made important advancements in safety (legislation to crack down on manufacturing of meth, funding of additional drug courts and elder abuse legislation); the economy (the first-ever comprehensive energy policy as well as several small business initiatives); health care (expanded newborn screening and e-health,

which creates a statewide electronic health network); and education (Read to Achieve, which provides early intervention help for struggling readers).

Together, we can continue to make great strides to improve the future of the commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Governor Ernie Fletcher



COMMONWEALTH
COMMUNIQUÉ

The *Commonwealth Communiqué* is published by the Kentucky Personnel Cabinet and is printed with state funds.

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If you have any comments or suggestions regarding *Communiqué*, please contact Margaret Harney at (502) 564-3433 or Margareta.Harney@ky.gov.

If you are unable to access *Communiqué* online, please let us know, and we will make a printed copy available to you.

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